

Serial No.: 10/509,155
Docket No.: 28953.7272

IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (Currently amended) A method of manufacturing a cordierite porous body ~~using~~ comprising providing a cordierite forming material materials comprising including an Al source, an Si source, and an Mg source, and firing the materials to form cordierite, and forming cordierite by firing, wherein the Al source and the Si source are at least partially provided by inorganic micro balloons containing Al_2O_3 and SiO_2 , wherein a moisture content of the inorganic micro balloons is 0.1% by mass or less ~~characterized in that an inorganic micro balloon containing SiO_2 and Al_2O_3 is used as a part or all of the Al source and the Si source.~~

2. (Currently amended) The method of manufacturing ~~the a~~ cordierite porous body according to claim 1, wherein a crush strength of the inorganic micro ~~balloon~~ balloons, measured by a micro compression tester, is 1 MPa or more.

3. (Currently amended) The method of manufacturing ~~the a~~ cordierite porous body according to claim 1, wherein a moisture content of the inorganic micro ~~balloon is~~ balloons is ~~0.1%~~ 0.08% by mass or less.

4. (Currently amended) The method of manufacturing ~~the~~ a cordierite porous body according to claim 1, wherein the inorganic micro balloons are ~~balloon~~ is obtained by calcining at 300°C or more.

5. (Currently amended) The method of manufacturing ~~the~~ a cordierite porous body according claim 1, wherein a ~~total~~ content of the Si source and the Al source included in the inorganic micro ~~balloon~~ balloons ~~with respect to the whole inorganic micro balloon~~ is 90% by mass or more, when the Si source is converted to SiO₂, and the Al source is converted to Al₂O₃.

6. (Currently amended) The method of manufacturing ~~the~~ a cordierite porous body according to claim 1, wherein a ~~total~~ content of a sodium compound and a potassium compound included in the inorganic micro ~~balloon~~ balloons ~~with the whole inorganic micro balloon~~ is 0.2 to 2% by mass, when the sodium compound is converted to Na₂O, and the potassium compound is converted to K₂O.

7. (Currently amended) The method of manufacturing ~~the~~ a cordierite porous body according to claim 1, wherein a melting point of the inorganic micro balloon balloons is 1400 to 1650°C.

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8. (Currently amended) The method of manufacturing the cordierite porous body according to claim 1, wherein a tap density of the inorganic micro ~~balloon~~ balloons is 0.5 g/cm^3 or less.

9. (Previously Presented) The method of manufacturing the cordierite porous body according to claim 1, wherein talc is used as a part or all of the Mg source.

10. (Currently amended) The method of manufacturing the cordierite porous body according to claim 1, wherein the Al source further comprises aluminum hydroxide ($\text{Al}(\text{OH})_3$) is ~~used as a part or all of the Al source except the inorganic micro balloon in a case where the~~
~~inorganic micro balloon is used as a part of the Al source.~~

11. (Currently amended) The method of manufacturing the cordierite porous body according to claim 1, wherein the Al source further comprises 20 to 52% by mass of kaolin with respect to an amount of the inorganic micro ~~balloon~~ balloons ~~is used as a part or all of the Al~~
~~source except the inorganic micro balloon in a case where the inorganic micro balloon is used as~~
~~a part of the Al source.~~